

# Murrow Program brings lively debate, tension and understanding to School

## MURROW:

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Ibrahim M. K. Qannan, a radio correspondent from Palestine, picked up on that point. “When it comes to freedom of expression in this country, how far can you go?” he asked. “What about the ethics of the profession?”

“I follow my instinct,” Marlette said. “It’s a struggle. It’s not cut and dried. It has to be hammered out.”

“Don’t you think that publishing controversial cartoons in such a tense situation is adding fuel to the fire?” pressed Bassam Ewaida, a freelance journalist from Germany.

“It’s adding fuel to something,” Marlette said. He noted, “It’s easier for us. We have a history of protection. We can be more cavalier. That’s the genius of America. It’s messy, but we may need to learn to tolerate a little mess.”

During a discussion of the Mohammed cartoons that led to violent protests last year, a journalist from Iraq, who asked not to be named or photographed, said, “What is holy is holy and there’s a red line.”

“I would say that free speech is holy,” Marlette

responded.

Lebanese television reporter Samer Ghazi made a fine distinction. “You are addressing elite readers and public readers,” he said. “There may be different meanings. You have to address people as they think, not as you think.”

“Images are more disruptive than words,” Marlette agreed. “Images overwhelm us. When it’s controversial, when people get upset, that’s when we need protection. That’s why we have a First Amendment. That’s the American way. You don’t have to apologize for your opinion whether you’re rich or poor. The law is insensitive in that way. There has to be a vigorous debate and exchange.”

They engaged in student life by hanging out on Franklin Street and eating in the campus dining hall. On the patio at Ham’s, a Chapel Hill restaurant and bar, first-year master’s student Aaron Kremer taught three Arab journalists how to turn the paper cover of a drinking straw into a projectile. The visitors further sampled Carolina culture by taking a day trip to Wilmington and shopping at Streets at Southpoint in Durham. Ghoudani fit in neatly at Southpoint in his orange Polo cap, headphones and peanut-dipped chocolate ice cream cone in hand. “This is

how Americans look, right?” he joked.

Even while joking about American stereotypes, the journalists felt obligated to dispel myths about their people. “We are here really to explain ourselves and our country,” said Halim Salman Abed, editor in chief of *Altabaa Aljadida* magazine in the United Kingdom.

To that end, the journalists were quick to speak their minds during lectures and after speeches.

“Faculty members who have spoken in our sessions have come prepared to lecture for an hour or more,” Bowers told the Board of Visitors. “They found, however, that questions and discussions started popping up after only about 15 minutes, and they never got back to their prepared lectures.

“We’ve had a stimulating exchange of ideas. It has been extremely informative for us to learn how the American press is perceived in the Arab world.”

The perception, Ghazi said, is that Americans care about America. “I have been here since April 1, and I don’t know what’s going on in my own country,” he said. “You don’t cover it.”

*Caroline K. Hauser is a 2006 master's graduate of the School.*



ABOVE: Heba Philip Zaki Michael, a reporter for *Al Alam*, *Al Yom* and *Al Sharq Al Awsat* newspapers in Egypt, chats with a student at *The Daily Tar Heel* during a tour of the DTH offices.

RIGHT, ABOVE: Nordin Ghoudani, left, chief editor of *MZine* magazine, talks with Doug Marlette following Marlette's presentation on editorial cartooning. Ghoudani, who lives and works in the Netherlands, is of Moroccan descent.

RIGHT, BELOW: Karen Jurgensen, former editor of *USA Today*, talks with Djamal Fenineche during a dinner for the Murrow participants and the School's Board of Vistors at the Carolina Inn. Fenineche works for *El Bilad* newspaper in Algeria.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Bassam Ewaida, a freelance journalist with *Radio Multikulti* in Berlin, makes a point during a roundtable discussion in the Freedom Forum Conference Center in Carroll Hall. At left is Gamal Ahmed Amer, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Al-Wasat* newspaper in Yemen.



Photos by Charlie Kellett, Program Officer, U.S. Department of State

